

Mr. Black was Rector of Bally, to which he was appointed in 1709, & also of Ramsholt, to which he was appointed in 1707. He died at Woodbridge Aug^t. 13^t. 1713, in the 59^t. year of his age.

His other Publications are,

Sermon on the Last Day 1793. L. - 1800.

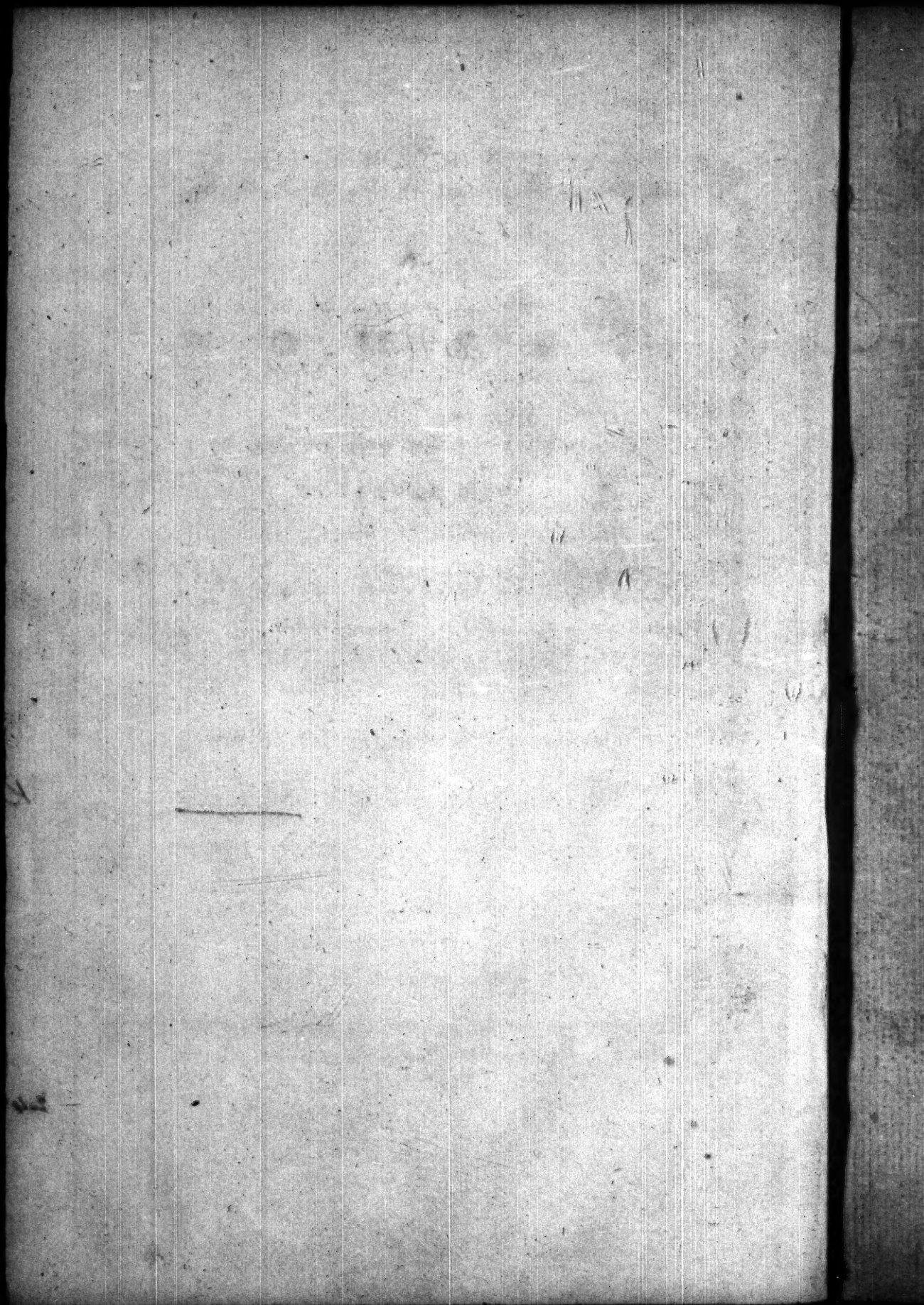
Some poetical Pieces, 1801.

The Free-school, a Poem, 1801.

The Taming of Samaria, 1795.

Poems, 1799.

The Vale of Innocence, a Vision, 1705.



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S E R M O N

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OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF
THE REVEREND

THOMAS CARTHEW, F. S. A.

(Late MINISTER of WOODBRIDGE, &c. &c.)

PREACHED AT WOODBRIDGE, JAN. 16. 1791.

BY THE REV. JOHN BLACK.

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AND J. NICHOLS, LONDON.

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S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF
THE REVEREND

THOMAS CARTHEW, F. S. A.

Late Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge, &c. &c.



PREACHED AT ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE, JAN. 10. 1871.

BY THE REV. JOHN BLACK

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. NICHOLS, CAMBRIDGE.

AND ALSO, BY G. HARRIS, LONDON.

AND J. NICHOLS, LONDON.

S E R M O N, &c.

GENESIS 49. CHAP. 33. VERSE.

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, be gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

IN this and the preceeding Chapter, we have a narrative of the sickness of the Patriarch Jacob, of his last injunctions to his sons, and of the serenity and composure with which he resigned his breath.

And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, behold thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim,—that he might obtain their venerable father's blessing for them. And one told Jacob, and said, behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

—The approach of this beloved son, whose fortunes had been so various; and who had been the cause, both of so much grief and joy, to his aged parent; revived the old man's spirits: he exerted all his strength to receive him, and sat up on his bed.

He then informs Joseph of the grand events of his life, and the promises that the Almighty had made to him. He speaks of Joseph's mother, Rachel, with tenderness and affection. He adopts the two sons of Joseph for his sons; as *Reuben and Simeon*, says he, *they shall be mine*. He blesses them and his son Joseph. — Afterwards, he desires *all his sons to gather themselves, that he may tell them, what shall befall them in the last days*.

Then he addresses himself to each of them; describes their character; and, in the spirit of prophecy, informs them of the fate of the different tribes that should arise from them, *and blessed them, every one according to his blessing he blessed them, and he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with*

with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite. His mind had now continued so long upon the stretch, with the prophetic visions that burst upon it, that nature was quite exhausted. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

The whole narrative, as it is contained in these two Chapters, is simple, natural and affecting. It is a striking picture of a good man, worn out with years, dying in peace amidst his family.

I need not inform you my Brethren, of the sorrowful event that suggested this subject to my mind. It will readily occur. It is an event deeply impressed upon all our minds; and which we shall long lament, in the most heart-felt manner: but I have not power to dwell upon it at present in pathetic terms: nor shall I attempt to harrow up your souls, by painting Death and all its consequences, in terrific forms. When the young and thoughtless are running the ca-

reer of folly, it may be proper sometimes to stop them in their course, and remind them of the goal that awaits us all.—When mirth degenerates into levity; when amusements lead to vice; it is proper to visit the house of mourning and the mansions of the dead; that the wild and sinful ebullitions of our passions meeting with a damp, we may recover our reason, and pursue the paths of virtue.

When some petty bubble of ambition glitters in our eye, when we are tormented with envy at another's superiority, when we are kindled into rage, or puffed up with pride; the thoughts of Death may prove salutary and useful. The voice of Wisdom may then be heard from the tomb. When we see the great and small mixed together; the crown and sceptre made equal with the scythe and spade: When we see the rival candidates for place and power sleeping together; the furious bigots that tormented each other, and the angry disputants that stunn'd the world, silent in the dust: When we see the proud man that looked down with contempt upon his fellow creatures as the dirt in the street, himself become a kneaded clod: We must then
be

seemingly persuaded of the vanity of all human preeminence; of the absurdity, as well as wickedness of striving to amass wealth by unlawful means; of the folly and madness of contending with heat and strife for the humble objects of ambition to which we can aspire: Every emotion of envy must die; every spark of rage become extinct.

When we see men proceeding in an abandoned course of life, in profligacy and hardened impenitence, it is necessary, in order to reclaim them, to describe death in all his horrors; the painful separation of soul and body; the sad reluctance with which it quits its hold; the eager anxiety it feels to stay a little longer and atone for its former misdeeds; and the dreadful horror with which it launches into the unknown gulf of eternity: and such descriptions are not less true than awful.

But when we are already oppressed with grief, and our spirits more than sufficiently damped, it is best to consider Death in the least gloomy light; and in that light happily we can contemplate him at present.

We see from the text, that the end of the good man was peace; even before life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel: for, it does not appear, (inspired as Jacob was with the spirit of prophecy) that he was acquainted with the resurrection of the dead; or expected any other kind of immortality than the continuance of his race in the promised land. It is reasonable to suppose indeed, that he, and the virtuous men of his age, might have some faint glimmering hopes of a resurrection. They might reason from analogy, that *as there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch, thereof will not cease;* so man would not be left abandoned in the dust. But at other times they would entertain a doubt, that *as the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.* They may rather be said to have wished for a resurrection than hoped for one: they could only express themselves with uncertainty,—*if man die shall he live again?* Yet with this cloud hanging over their minds,—though they saw an eternal night approaching, and knew not that it would ever dawn again; yet the end of the righteous was peace: if they had little

to hope, they had nothing to fear. But the latter end of the Christian is not only peace, but often triumph. *He cries out, O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*—In this respect a Christian on his death-bed, has greatly the advantage of the Patriarch of old. He cannot like the Patriarch, indeed, foretell the fate of his children; *whether they will come to honour, or be brought low.* He can only give them his best advice; and warn them to avoid the errors to which he sees their natural tempers and dispositions most expose them: but he can embrace them with a hope that they are not to be separated for ever; that they shall meet again in *a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.* Instead of the spirit of prophecy, Faith unveils the eternal world to his view. He beholds afar off a better land of promise than that which Jacob saw; an inheritance, which he, as well as his children, shall possess for ever.

Such, my Brethren, was the death of *him*, who lately addressed you from this place, with pastoral care and parental tenderness. He had not attained to *the age of the life of Israel*, which was an hundred and forty-seven

years;

(to)

years; but the close of his life was equally peaceful and serene; and his affection to his children fully as conspicuous in his last moments. The dews of night fall not more gently to the ground; nor the winds at the close of day expire more softly than he did. But his mind possessed all its wonted vigour. His understanding was as clear as ever, and he could converse on any subject he mentioned with the utmost precision. —Merciful God! can we suppose, Independent of Revelation, that such an intellect should cease to exist in a moment; that such a lamp should be extinguished for ever!

It is not to be supposed, situated as he was, but that he had a desire to live,—He had many reasons that tended to cherish that desire. He was in no want of the comforts of life. He enjoyed all the sweets of domestic society. He saw his family rising like olive branches round about his table: and he enjoyed the rare felicity of never having his heart rent by their bad conduct. It was natural for a Parent so tender and indulgent as he was, to wish to live a little longer for the sake of his younger children; that he might shelter

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ter them under his wing, 'till they were fit to conduct themselves in the world. But whatever desire he had to live, it was such as was suitable to the faith of a Christian and the fortitude of a good man.

He trusted his children to the care of Providence, and their mutual and affectionate support of one another. Without doubt likewise he had room to suppose, that the respectable situation he has maintained in society, and his long usefulness to mankind, would in some measure recommend them to the countenance and favour of the world; and that gratitude to himself, would produce attention to his offspring.

As to his prospect of futurity, it was accompanied with no terror. He was supported by a consciousness of having done his duty with diligence and integrity; and his notions of the Deity were not those of a gloomy bigot, who looks up to the God of mercy as an implacable Demon, delighting in the torture of the creatures he has made. His own heart, naturally benevolent, prompted him to look upon benevolence as being a principal attribute of the Creator of man: For what

other motive could God have for bestowing life, than that of bestowing happiness? Therefore, though he possessed an undoubting faith that our Saviour will come to Judgement; that he will sever the sheep from the goats: and that every man will be rewarded according to his works: yet he by no means understood the words of our Blessed Lord—*strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life*—in so strict a sense, as to suppose with some, that not one in a thousand should go in *thereat*; and that all those who are excluded shall be unceasingly tortured to eternity.

But why, my Brethren, should I mention this to you, who have listened, with so much pleasure, to his Discourses for many years?—In what a mild, affectionate manner did he not always address you? How plain and clear were the arguments, which he adduced to confirm your faith?—How winningly did he not persuade you to the practice of virtue; and how soothing and consolatory were his views of religion in general?—I trust his instructions have sunk deep into your hearts;

hearts; that they will never be erased from your memories; and that their good effects will be interwoven with the whole tenor of your lives.

As I have been upwards of eleven years the assistant of your late worthy Pastor in the care of this Parish; and have, from the first moment of our acquaintance, enjoyed the happiness of being received by him at all times, on the footing of an intimate friend; as I have so long been a witness of his amiable life; of his public and private virtues; I could draw such a portrait of his character, as the ill-natured part of the world would say, could have no resemblance to any original.

But though my affectionate gratitude would lead me to say much in his praise; though your hearts would respond to my voice; though they would echo the truth of what I might advance; for they are, they must be in unison with mine: yet as his character is so well known to you all, I shall be very brief in what I say upon it; and am more afraid I shall be blamed by you for not doing justice to his virtues, than for extolling them beyond their due desert.

In his family you beheld him, not the stern despot, whose wife and children tremble at his look; but the fond husband; the tender indulgent Father, the familiar friend, the easy companion of his children.— You never saw his countenance wrapt in a sullen gloom that foreboded a terrible tempest of passion: his anger, whenever his anger rose, was slighter than a summer shower, and sooner over. He esteemed the forgiveness of injuries one of the most essential Christian duties.— But as a Duty he never had occasion to practise it.— What others are obliged to bend their stubborn hearts to do from principle, he did spontaneously, from the native goodness of his heart. Nor was he less open and candid in his temper, than he was kind and forgiving. No man was ever more open to conviction, more willing to listen to others, though they differed from him, or readier to change his sentiments, when he saw sufficient reason for the alteration.

His mind was enlightened with much various reading, and his conversation conveyed a great deal of useful information; yet notwithstanding of this, and his station in life, which, of itself, would have commanded attention;

attention; he was extremely modest in company: he never spoke in a loud or over bearing manner: he hated disputes and never harangued. His humour never gave pain or offence; his wit did not flash and wound but sparkle and delight; and there was about him a pleasant gaiety; an innocent cheerfulness; a certain desire to receive, and to communicate pleasure, in the social intercourse of life, that contributed much to the happiness of this place, and will long be remembered with regret.

From his having studied the Laws of his Country, with great attention, he was qualified far beyond what Country Gentlemen and the Clergy generally are, for the exercise of the office of an acting Magistrate; which, as you well know, he long discharged with much benefit to this Country, and honour to himself. —He knew mankind well; yet his opinion of Human Nature was favourable; and, in the administration of Justice, if he had a bias, it was to the side of mercy. —He was a friend and father to the Poor; ever kind and attentive,—ready to relieve their distresses, and contribute to their comfort; particularly when they languished

grievous on the bed of sickness.

But your own acquaintance with him; and the grateful sensations of your own bosoms; (for who is there among you that has not had reason to be grateful to him?) will enable each of you to recollect some amiable quality, some favourable trait of his character, which you will be sorry has escaped me; which you will think in my situation you could have done greater justice to; upon which you will long dwell with pleasure, in your private conversations, and make up, by your general voice, for the defects of this attempt.

Though his body sleep in death, and be gathered to his fathers, *his witness is with God, and his record on high;—His memory shall be blessed, and his name held in lasting remembrance.*

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F I N I S.

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